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RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA AND ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION

Written statement submitted by Christian Solidarity International, a non-governmental organization on the Roster

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[7 January 1999]

Racism: Leading to genocide and slavery in the Sudan

1. Christian Solidarity International (CSI) has repeatedly drawn the attention of the United Nations (in particular, the Secretary-General, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Commission on Human Rights and its Sub-Commission) to genocide and related crimes against humanity committed by agents of the Government of the Sudan, which is totally controlled by the National Islamic Front (NIF). These crimes are the consequence of its proclaimed jihad, waged against what is considered the "domestic enemy" - in fact, 90 per cent of the Sudan's population, including Christians, Muslims and animists, who are the victims of a totalitarian ideology. These Sudanese citizens belong to the overwhelming majority, who do not openly and constantly support the NIF-controlled Government. (The NIF received about 16 per cent of the eligible vote in the last incomplete democratic election held in 1986.)

2. The term genocide is used here according to the definition provided in article II of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide:

> "In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:
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> "(a) Killing members of the group;
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> "(b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
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> "(c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; ...
>
> "(e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group."

3. There is an abundance of evidence upon which the Government can be held responsible by the international community on all four counts, after it seized power in 1989 by a military coup d'état. The most recently published documentation is contained in the report, Quantifying Genocide in Southern Sudan and the Nuba Mountains 1983-1998 (December 1998, pp. 84). It was researched and written by Dr. Millard Burr, formerly director of logistics for USAID in the Sudan. The US Committee for Refugees, the publisher of Dr. Burr's report, summarized it in their press release entitled, "1.9 million dead from Sudan's civil war; more than 70,000 deaths in 1998 report estimates" (10 December 1998). The report estimates that more than 70,000 Sudanese civilians died of war-related causes in the first half of 1998 alone and predicts the ultimate death toll this year will climb significantly higher as more research becomes available.

4. According to UNICEF's latest report, more than 4 million Sudanese will continue to live under the threat of famine if peace and security are not firmly established in the conflict-affected areas throughout the country. On 22 December 1998, Phillipe Borel, United Nations coordinator for relief operations in the Sudan and the head of Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS), stated: "Many people are surviving on the bare minimum and that slim hope could be shattered in the event their lives are once again disrupted by turmoil. Even a few weeks of insecurity, especially in Bahr-El-Ghazal, could produce the kind of crisis we confronted earlier this year."

5. By late 1998, the report said, persistent insecurity, especially around Leer, and flooding had displaced some 150,000 people, forced OLS agencies to evacuate, and limited humanitarian services to some locations only. (Since 1992, OLS temporary evacuations from locations in southern Sudan and disruptions in delivering humanitarian aid have been caused in most cases by deliberate and indiscriminate bombardments of civilian targets by the government air force.)

6. The principal victims of this ongoing genocide are the racial, ethnic and religious African communities of southern and central Sudan - particularly in the Nuba Mountains, northern Bahr-El-Ghazal and the southern Blue Nile. These irrefutable facts clearly point to a racist policy, as was already signalled by the former Special Rapporteur, Dr. Gáspár Biró, in his 1995 interim report to the General Assembly when he wrote:

> "That according to persistent reports and testimonies received by the Special Rapporteur personally, as well as to findings based on field investigations in southern Sudan and in the Nuba Mountains by independent human rights organizations during the past three years, converging on the fact that victims of these violations are exclusively persons belonging to racial, ethnic and religious minorities from southern Sudan, the Nuba Mountains area and the Ingessena Hills, and the perpetrators belong to the armed forces, PDF, local militias armed by the Government of the Sudan and groups of mujahidin fighting together with the army in southern Sudan.
>
> "The Special Rapporteur cannot but conclude that the abduction of persons, mainly women and children belonging to racial, ethnic and religious minorities from southern Sudan, the Nuba Mountains and the Ingessena Hills area, their subjection to the slave trade, including traffic in and sale of children and women, slavery, servitude, forced labour and similar practices are taking place with the knowledge of the Government of the Sudan. The manifest passivity of the Government of the Sudan in this regard after years of reporting and calls upon it by United Nations organs and international non-governmental organizations affiliated with the United Nations and the subsequent lack of any measures to protect Sudanese citizens from these practices lead to the conclusion that abductions, slavery and institutions and practices similar to slavery are carried out by persons acting under the authority and with the tacit approval of the Government of the Sudan. The overwhelmingly dominant racial connotation of this phenomena and the fact that the abductions take place mostly in a war-affected area are to be considered as particularly aggravating circumstances." (A/50/569, annex, para. 74 (e) and 75).

7. All subsequent reports by Dr. Biró to the General Assembly and the Commission - and those from other NGO sources, including CSI - have highlighted the fact that the victims of slavery and slavery-like practices are members of the above-mentioned victimized groups, especially their women and children.

8. Another element in this racist policy that has led to the ongoing genocide is the discrimination on ethnic, political and racial grounds against the Beja community living in north eastern Sudan. The Beja are virtually all Muslim, yet they, too, are not exempt from victimization by a regime that claims to be Islamic and is a member of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). The Government officially declared a jihad in January 1992. This was legalized in April 1992 by a fatwa issued by extremist religious leaders and imams of Kordofan State, as reported by Dr. Biró in his 1996 report (E/CN.4/1996/62, para. 97 (a)):

"A fatwa issued in April 1992 and publicly supported at the highest government level explicitly sets forth the status of all those who oppose the [Government]:

"'The rebels in south Kordofan and southern Sudan started their rebellion against the State and declared war against the Muslims. Their main aims are: killing the Muslims, desecrating mosques, burning and defiling the Koran, and raping Muslim women. In so doing, they are encouraged by the enemies of Islam and Muslims: these foes are the Zionists, the Christians and the arrogant people who provide them with provisions and arms. Therefore, an insurgent who was previously a Muslim is now an apostate; and a non-Muslim is a non-believer standing as a bulwark against the spread of Islam, and Islam has granted the freedom of killing both of them.'" (See also E/CN.4/1994/48, para. 78.)

9. As a result, the Beja and many other black African Muslims from the Nuba Mountains and the southern Blue Nile, who continue to resist the implementation of the Government's extremist Islamist policies, number among the victims of their genocide and related crimes against humanity.

10. The sobering findings in Dr. Burr's above-mentioned report corroborate those of Dr. Biró and are fully supported by CSI's representatives, who have undertaken over 20 fact-finding visits to the Sudan since 1992, and who have assembled a mass of evidence while travelling to northern, central and southern Sudan, and to areas controlled by the Government and the forces of the opposition movement showing that man-made famine, slavery and the bombing of civilian targets are three of the most potent instruments of its genocidal jihad. From October 1995 to January 1999, CSI has redeemed 5,066 slaves. (CSI trip reports, 1992-1999)

11. All this was again echoed by the Harvard law scholar, Mary Ann Glendon. In a New York Times article on 8 December 1998, "Sudan's unpunished atrocities", she stated: "Sudan's National Islamic Front Government has been conducting a genocidal campaign, in the predominantly Christian southern part of the country that has already claimed more victims than the conflicts in Rwanda, Bosnia and Kosovo combined. The overwhelming majority of the casualties are not rebels, but civilians who do not share the regime's radical Islamic ideology ... . Tens of thousands of women and children, deemed 'infidels', have been captured as war booty, taken from their families and forced into unpaid labour. Many are routinely beaten and abused. Some have been forced to convert to Islam and given Arabic names. This year, the Government bombed a Sudanese refugee camp in Uganda and has bombed humanitarian targets - hospitals and feeding centres - at least 40 times. Two Roman Catholic priests were tortured while detained on suspicious charges of sabotage. They may face the death penalty, which could mean crucifixion, under the Sudanese penal code."

12. CSI fully concurs with Pope John Paul II who, in his 1998 Christmas message, said that the spirit of Christmas should prompt people to take measures "to restrain the bloodied hand of those responsible for genocide and crimes of war".

13. While the chorus of protests against the genocide in the Sudan is growing throughout the world, the silence of the United Nations Secretary-General, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Commission and its Sub-Commission is incomprehensible. Irrefutable evidence of the genocide in the Sudan has been presented to the United Nations in abundance. Now is not the time for procrastination, but for decisive action that corresponds to the anti-genocide rhetoric of the highest United Nations officials. Last year, the Secretary-General inspired the world by courageously confessing that "the world failed Rwanda". He also declared: "The decision not to act is also a decision, but one which can have far more dangerous consequences than the decision to act" (translated from an interview with Kofi Annan, Tribune de Genève, 30 March 1998).

14. Let it not be said in 1999 - more than 50 years after the adoption of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights - that the international community allowed the Sudanese genocide to continue into the next century.

15. CSI calls upon the United Nations as a body, and Member States individually, to encourage the international community to find the appropriate mechanisms to deal with the Sudanese holocaust effectively, by:

(a) Enforcing anti-genocide measures;

(b) Providing a forum for high-level deliberations on short- and long-term efforts to stop and prevent genocide;

(c) Establishing an investigation into the Government's genocide in the Sudan by an international commission of eminent personalities;

(d) Accelerating programmes to bring to justice perpetrators of crimes against humanity;

(e) Terminating the Government's practice of preventing the delivery of emergency humanitarian aid to the victims of genocide; and

(f) Increasing the existing sanctions imposed on the Sudan by United Nations Security Council resolutions 1044, 1055 and 1070, including, if required, a complete oil and arms embargo.

16. CSI, therefore, urges the fifty-fifth session of the Commission on Human Rights to play a crucial role now in bringing the NIF's genocide and related crimes against humanity in the Sudan to an end by addressing directly these fundamental issues in strong condemnatory resolutions that are commensurate with the magnitude of this horrendous human tragedy.